

Date: February 16, 2009

From: Steve Gray/Property owner near Warren, Montana

TO: House Appropriations Committee

RE: House Bill 583  
Bio Product Innovation Center Funding

The value of funding for projects like that recently implemented on my property near Warren, Montana, is essential to improve the economic viability of our land and has the potential to turn what is currently over-grazed and very unproductive scrub land into very productive land and an essential renewable energy source for Montana and the Northwest US.

This particular project is a wind resource assessment, prepared, administered, and funded through the office of Beartooth RC&D in Joliet, Montana, with the specific objective to determine the economic feasibility of a commercial-scale wind farm. This wind resource assessment has significant long-term value for the economic development of the local rural community, as a commercial-scale wind farm is a multi-million dollar project employing many local contractors for project development and maintenance.

In addition, this specific project has the potential to financially benefit a number of local ranchers and farmers, to include myself and my neighbors, which will, in turn, add to the tax base of Carbon County and Montana.

Beartooth RC&D has exceptional staff and developed a very thorough and professional grant for the wind resource assessment project under the very capable leadership of Joel Bertolino.

I encourage you to expand the funding support of Beartooth RC&D, especially given the very difficult economic conditions. These projects are essential to seed our economic development projects and funding is required to continue the mission of Beartooth RC&D in Carbon County.

Should you have any questions, please contact me; my cell number is 503-752-1877.

Respectfully,

Steven D. Gray  
Property Owner, Warren, Montana

Date: February 16, 2009

From: Kyle Nielsen  
Grains of Montana Bakery Operations  
802 South 26<sup>th</sup> Street  
Billings, MT 59101

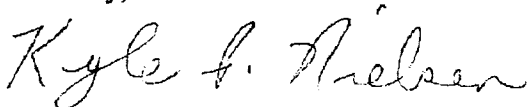
TO: House Appropriations Committee

RE: Bio Product Innovation Center Funding  
House Bill 583

Please accept this letter of support for the continued funding of the Bio Product Innovation Centers in Montana. We have worked with our regional Bio Product Innovation Center located in the Beartooth RC&D in Joliet, MT. We believe the work being done to assist entrepreneurs in the areas of value added agriculture and alternative energy production is of great importance. These centers are crucial for revitalizing the economic future for rural Montana through the increased jobs and revenue captured by adding value to our agricultural products and harnessing the wind, sun and crops to produce power and fuel.

The Beartooth RC&D Bio Product Innovation Center has provided technical assistance that resulted in the growth and promotion of our business. The need for this type of assistance is more acute now than ever and there are few places that provide this type of assistance. We hope you will look favorably upon the request for funding of the Montana Bio Product Innovation Centers.

Sincerely,



Kyle Nielsen  
President, Grains of Montana Bakery Operations

Date: February 16, 2009

From: Montana Bio-Industries

TO: House Appropriations Committee

RE: Bio Product Innovation Center Funding  
House Bill 583

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Sincerely,  
Dan Downs, President

Calvin Lane, Secretary

*Calvin Lane*

Date: February 16, 2009

From: Midland Bull Test  
Columbus, MT 59019

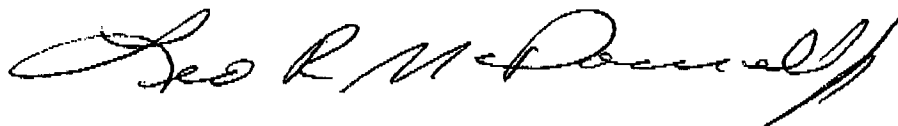
TO: House Appropriations Committee

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Leo R. McDaniel". The signature is fluid and stylized, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Date: February 16, 2009

From: Stillwater Packing Co.  
Columbus, MT 59019

TO: House Appropriations Committee

RE: Bio Product Innovation Center Funding  
House Bill 583

Please accept this letter of support for the continued funding of the Bio Product Innovation Centers in Montana. We have worked with our regional Bio Product Innovation Center located in the Beartooth RC&D in Joliet, MT. We believe the work being done to assist entrepreneurs in the areas of value added agriculture and alternative energy production is of great importance. These centers are crucial for revitalizing the economic future for rural Montana through the increased jobs and revenue captured by adding value to our agricultural products and harnessing the wind, sun and crops to produce power and fuel.

The Beartooth RC&D Bio Product Innovation Center has provided technical assistance that resulted in the growth and promotion of our business. The need for this type of assistance is more acute now than ever and there are few places that provide this type of assistance. We hope you will look favorably upon the request for funding of the Montana Bio Product Innovation Centers.

Sincerely,

*Dewey S. Emmett*  
*Kathleen J. Emmett*

Date: February 16, 2009

From: Bonnie Martinell On Thyme Gourmet Inc.

TO: House Appropriations Committee

RE: Bio Product Innovation Center Funding  
House Bill 583

Please accept this letter of support for the continued funding of the Bio Product Innovation Centers in Montana. We have worked with our regional Bio Product Innovation Center located in the Beartooth RC&D in Joliet, MT. We believe the work being done to assist entrepreneurs in the areas of value added agriculture and alternative energy production is of great importance. These centers are crucial for revitalizing the economic future for rural Montana through the increased jobs and revenue captured by adding value to our agricultural products and harnessing the wind, sun and crops to produce power and fuel.

The Beartooth RC&D Bio Product Innovation Center has provided technical and financial assistance that resulted in the growth and promotion of our business. The need for this type of assistance is more acute now than ever and there are few places that provide this type of assistance. We would not have grown or even still be in business had it not been for the assistance that the Beartooth RC&D Center had provided us. We hope you will look favorably upon the request for funding of the Montana Bio Product Innovation Centers.

Sincerely,

Bonnie Martinell  
CEO  
On Thyme Gourmet Inc.  
157 Hergenrider RD  
Bridger, MT59014

Date: February 16, 2009

From: Becky Stahl

TO: House Appropriations Committee

RE: Bio Product Innovation Center Funding  
House Bill 583

Please accept this letter of support for the continued funding of the Bio Product Innovation Centers in Montana. We have worked with our regional Bio Product Innovation Center located in the Beartooth RC&D in Joliet, MT. We believe the work being done to assist entrepreneurs in the areas of value added agriculture and alternative energy production is of great importance. These centers are crucial for revitalizing the economic future for rural Montana through the increased jobs and revenue captured by adding value to our agricultural products and harnessing the wind, sun and crops to produce power and fuel.

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Sincerely,

Becky Stahl  
Becky's Berries  
10A Kem LN  
Absarokee Mt.59001  
406 328 4084



EXHIBIT 4  
DATE 2/19/09  
HB 583

118 E. Seventh St.; Suite 2A Anaconda, MT 59711  
ph: 406.563.5259 fx: 406.563.5476  
<http://www.medamembers.org>

February 16, 2009

**TO: Rep. Jon Sesso, Chairman, House Appropriations Committee and  
Members of the House Appropriations Committee**

**RE: HB583 Fund Food and Agriculture Innovation Centers**

The Montana Economic Developers Association (MEDA) represents over 200 professionals who work for local economic development organizations across the state of Montana. We are professional "lead" economic developers, business specialists, government employees, and staff members of affiliated non-profit organizations which promote and foster economic development activities in Montana.

While MEDA understands the constraints of the General Fund Budget, MEDA would like to express strong support for Montana's Ag Innovation Centers, also known as Bio-Product Innovation Centers. This program has proven its success and assists entrepreneurs in the areas of food manufacturing and alternative energy production. These centers hold tremendous potential for economic development in both urban and rural communities by ensuring that more of the state's food, agricultural, and energy dollars circulate in Montana – revitalizing communities, improving access to healthier food for our citizens, and reconnecting our rural and urban economies.

Montanans spend more than \$3 billion a year on food, yet our agriculture-related businesses are capturing only a tiny fraction of that for our state's economy and communities. The economic crisis is growing more serious every day. This is a sensible economic development investment – an agricultural, food and farm-energy economic stimulus for Montana.

Thank you for your consideration of support to fund food and agriculture innovation centers as detailed in HB583.

Sincerely,

Rick Edwards  
MEDA Legislative Committee Co-Chair

JOIN US AT <http://www.medamembers.org>

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\* KATHIE BAILEY, LEWISTOWN \* PAUL TUSS, HAVRE \* STEVE ARVESHOU, BILLINGS \* KEN RICHARDSON, MISSOULA \*



Date: February 16, 2009

From: Beartooth Resource Conservation and Development  
Joel Bertolino Program Coordinator

TO: House Appropriations Committee

RE: Bio Product Innovation Center Funding  
House Bill 583

Beartooth RC&D has been working as an Ag Innovation Center since its inception in 2003. The funding resource changed beginning in 2006 which allowed us to continue our technical assistance and outreach however we were now limited to working on projects within the WIRED region which is the eastern 32 counties of Montana. The program has grown and prospered in that time despite being limited in our ability to serve the entire state under this program as it was intended when it was first funded in 2002-03.

Beartooth RC&D through the Bio Product Innovation Center have assisted numerous businesses in the region resulting in increased sustainability and increased jobs. Some Businesses we have recently assisted and programs and outreach we have utilized are listed below.

**Carbon County**- Sams Tap Room, Bonnie Martinell On Thyme Gourmet, Steve Grey Warren Wind Feasibility Study, Red Lodge Farmers Market, Carbon Sequestration technical assistance.

**Stillwater County**- Midland Bull Test, Stillwater Packing Co., Beckies Berries, Ag business Workshop.

**Yellowstone County**- Grains of Montana Restaurant and Bakery, Montana Bio Industries Cooperative, Ag Business Workshops, Concept to Consumer Workshop,

**Big Horn County**- 3 Bros Pizza, Custer Battlefield Trading Post, Ag Business Workshop, Carbon Sequestration workshop and technical assistance for several producers, Organic Farming Technical Assistance.

**Sweetgrass County**- Sweetgrass Lamb Coop, Carbon Sequestration Technical Assistance.

The need for this type of assistance is more acute now than ever, we hope you will look favorably upon the request for funding of the Incumbent Worker Training Grant program.

Should you have any questions, please contact our office 406-962-3914

Sincerely,



Joel Bertolino  
Program Coordinator, Beartooth RC&D-Joliet, Montana